

Please amend the Application as follows.

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

1-9. (Canceled)

10. (currently amended) A process for preparing [[a]] tungsten carbide comprising:

(a) ~~gas-phase carburization~~ carburizing of a material selected from the group consisting of tungsten powder[[s]], and/or suitable tungsten precursor compound powder[[s]] and combinations thereof, at a temperature ranging from 850° to 950°, and in the presence of a carburizing gas phase,

~~wherein the said~~ carburizing gas phase used is a CO<sub>2</sub>/CO comprising a mixture of CO and CO<sub>2</sub>, with said carburizing gas phase having a CO<sub>2</sub> content which is above the Boudouard equilibrium content corresponding to the carburization temperature, and

~~wherein the carburization~~ carburizing step is carried out with a carbon activity ranging from 0.4 to less than 1[[.]]; and

(b) ~~wherein the process further comprises subjecting~~ heat treating the tungsten carbide formed in step (a) made by the process to a heat treatment at a temperature ranging from 1,150°C to 1,800°C after carburization, thereby forming the tungsten carbide.

11. (Currently Amended) The process ~~according to~~ of Claim 10, wherein ~~carburization~~ carburizing step (a) is carried out with a carbon activity ranging from 0.4 to 0.9.

12. (Currently Amended) The process ~~according to~~ of Claim 10, wherein the ~~carburization~~ carburizing step (a) is conducted at a temperature ranges of from 900°C to 950°C.

13. (Currently Amended) The process ~~according to~~ of Claim 10, wherein the ~~carburization is carried out at the carburization temperature~~ carburizing step (a) is conducted over a period ranging from 4 to 10 hours.

14. (Previously Presented) The process ~~according to~~ of Claim 10, wherein the tungsten precursor compound powder is tungsten oxide powder.

15. (Canceled)